LEADING FROM WITHIN
Palmer Parker

'A quick definition of a leader: a leader is a person who has an unusual degree of power to project on other people his or her shadow or his or her light.'

'A leader is a person who must take special responsibility for what's going on inside him or her… The problem is that people rise to leadership in our society by a tendency towards extroversion, which means a tendency to ignore what is going on inside themselves… Great leadership comes from people who have made that downward journey.'
Parker Palmer

The Shadow Life of Leaders

A DEEP INSECURITY ABOUT THEIR OWN IDENTITY
- Hard to see in extroverts.
- So hooked up with institutional functions we may die when they're taken away.
- We create settings that deprive others of their own identity.
- The great spiritual gift from the inward journey is to know that who I am does not depend on what I do.

COMPETITIVENESS
- Seeing the universe as hostile.
- So if we're not competitive we're going to lose – becomes self-fulfilling prophecy.
- There's another way, a way that's co-operative and communal.
- The spiritual gift from the inward journey is knowing that the universe is working together for good.

FUNCTIONAL ATHEISM
- Ultimate responsibility for everything rests on me.
- Leads to workaholic behaviour, to burn-out, to stressed, strained and broken relationships, to unhealthy priorities.
- The great gift on the inward journey is knowing that ours is not the only act in town. We do not have to carry the whole load, we can share the load, and sometimes we can even lay our part of the load down.

FEAR OF CHAOS
- Which is natural to life.
- Projects outwards into rigid rules/procedures.
- We forget that God created out of chaos: the precondition to creativity.
- The spiritual gift from the inward journey is knowing that creation comes out of chaos.

DENIAL OF DEATH
- Maintaining things that aren't alive any longer and maybe never have been.
- Programmes that should have been laid down ten years ago are still on the life-support system.
- There's a fear in this denial of death: the fear of negative evaluation, public failure.
- Surprisingly the people least afraid of death, in this sense, are the scientists – they learn something from the death of an idea.
- The spiritual gift from the inward journey is knowing that death is not the final word.

'It would be wonderful if the phrase inner work could become a central term… in our churches… things you can do that constitute inner work… are as real and important as any outer project or task.'
Parker Palmer